

Job Aid – Alternative Online Assessments

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Purpose

This job aid describes some assessments which can be implemented online as well as some tips and resources on their use.

Background

There are many great alternative assessment possibilities to show student understanding that can be done online. This document outlines case studies, critical reflections, podcasts, annotated bibliographies, news article critiques, and online discussions. A description of each with examples, resources, and rubrics for you to use or adapt is included.

Alternative Assessments

Case Studies

A case study presents students with a real-life or hypothetical scenario which is specific to the discipline and potentially what students might face in their careers. Case studies can be multidisciplinary and provide opportunities for students to apply concepts, research and evaluate other sources of information, work in groups, and present their ideas. Cases can be simple and short to long and complex.

A quality case study has the following characteristics:

- There is no one clear answer or solution
- Has sufficient information to promote a thorough analysis
- Requires the student to think critically and analytically to recommend potential solutions.

Assessment strategies for online case studies:

- Post the case study in Moodle for students to read and respond to in a written assignment
- Created a case-based quiz for students to answer and post on Moodle.

Resources:

- [Teaching Methods for Case Studies](#)
- [Teaching Students to Write a Case Study](#)
- [Case Studies: Assessment](#)
- [Assessment by Case Studies and Scenarios](#)

Critical Reflections

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A critical reflection paper combines critical and reflective thinking skills to articulate transformative learning that is supported by course learning materials and lived experiences. A critical reflection is not a summary of a reading but rather an opportunity for students to internalize and evaluate significant shifts in perspective that require openness and curiosity.

What to consider:

- Provide examples and non-examples of critical reflection papers for students to read
- Use the discussion board to encourage conversation and questions about the papers
- Remind students to avoid thinking of this assignment as a diary entry
- Have students submit their critical reflection assignment through Moodle.

Resources:

- [Critical Reflection](#)
- [Creating Critical Reflection Assignments - A Resource for Faculty](#)

Assignment templates:

- [DEEP - A Model for Reflective Learning](#)

Rubric ideas:

- [AACU Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric](#)
- [AACU Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric](#)
- [Rubric for the What? So What? Now What? Critical Reflection Framework](#)

Podcasts

A podcast is an audio narrative that uses audio recording to capture student self-expression and analytical skills in creative ways. A podcast is not a recording of a student reading a traditional paper. This assignment can be done individually (a voice memo) or collaboratively (conducting interviews).

What to consider:

- Have students listen to sample podcasts and share their thoughts in the discussion board
- Keep it simple, have students use their phones to record a 3-5 minute podcast.
- Require students to write a script they will submit alongside their audio file.
- Use a rubric to grade their final podcast assignment.

Assignment Design:

- [Sample Voice Memo Assignment](#)
- [Essay Assignment - Podcast](#)
- [Podcasts as an Assessment Tool in Higher Education](#)

Rubric ideas:

- [AACU Oral Communication VALUE Rubric](#)
- [Another Podcast Rubric](#)

Annotated bibliographies

An annotated bibliography assignment requires students to summarize the most salient literature on a course topic, making it a good choice for learning one topic in depth. Students develop skills in locating

relevant literature, analyzing the quality of articles, understanding the arguments being made, and summarizing them in a brief description.

Example assignment guidelines:

- [Annotated Bibliography Assignment](#)
- [How To Write an Annotated Bibliography](#)

News Article Critiques

Critiquing a current news article can be a meaningful learning experience as news articles are relevant and provide opportunity for critical analysis. Students will need to either critique a selected news article, or find one based on specific criteria to critique. This type of assignment can be used to assess students' ability to identify credible news sources, research and provide other sources of supporting or contradicting information, express and justify their positions, and clearly communicate their ideas.

What to consider:

- Provide examples of a news article critique and use the discussion board to discuss the elements of a good critique and news source. Post a rubric or assessment criteria to help guide students work.
- Break the class into small discussion groups to provide each other with peer feedback
- Use Moodle for students to submit their assignment
- Give students the option of using media to complete their assignment (such as recording a video or creating an infographic).

Resources:

- [Media Critique](#)
- [Media Critiques](#)

Online discussions

Online discussions gives students the opportunity to brainstorm ideas or work on project collaboratively, share their work, and reflect on the learning process. Different activities could be designed and implemented in online discussions to promote analytical and critical thinking. Start with a question or a prompt from the readings, the News or a video and ask students to post an original thought and a response to at least one other classmate's comment.

- [Online discussion rubric](#) by Dr. Susan Wegmann, Professor of Education and the Director of Program Development and Special Programs at the Baptist College of Florida
- [Online discussion participation rubric](#) by Dr. Kelvin Thompson
- [Designing and Orchestrating Online Discussions](#) by David Baker (2011)
- [The methods and means to grading student participation in online discussions](#)
- [Online discussion forum grading rubric](#) (*Alternative Online Assessments*, n.d.)

References

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